



WOMEN IN BUSINESS WEDNESDAYS INTERVIEW

SARAH KAUSS
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRWOMAN
S'WELL

Today, we are kicking off Women in Business Wednesdays with Founder and Executive Chairwoman of S'well and Women's Forum member, Sarah Kauss. Sarah shares with us her insight as a businesswoman, providing valuable tips and motivation. It's time for our first #WBW !

WF: How did you get your idea or concept for the business and why did you choose it?

SARAH: The idea came about on a hike in Arizona when I took a sip of warm water from my reusable bottle that I carried with me everywhere. I realized in that moment that, if I could create a reusable bottle that looked better and worked harder, I might be able to do more good in the world. I started to write my business plan immediately.

I was at a point in my career where I was looking for something more in my life. I had grown up with parents who were entrepreneurs and I saw firsthand how rewarding it could be. So S'well presented the opportunity to bring my personal vision to life – really doing something meaningful in the world tied to single-use plastic and the water crisis -- while also being in control of my career.

WF: What are your responsibilities as the business owner?

SARAH: I have worn every hat possible. For the first two years, I was the only employee which meant I was handling the sales, accounting, marketing and logistics of S'well. Ten years later, as founder and Executive Chairwoman, I play a different role managing the brand vision and global partnerships that I believe are going to help us transform the world and consumer behavior.

WF: Did you have any mentors that encouraged you? If so, who were they and how did you connect with them?

SARAH: Mentors are an entrepreneur's best friend. For me, I didn't necessarily have one mentor who knew everything there was to know about retail and manufacturing. I had a network of smart people from all backgrounds that wanted to see me succeed and were willing to share their wisdom. Today, I continue to take this approach, talking to interesting and inspiring people from all sectors to have a better understanding of what has worked for them and what advice they may have for me. When I do come across unknowns, I think through who might be the best person to contact – this includes peers in the industry and outside of it – to try to learn.

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#WBW #wfnnyWBW #womensforumNY



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WF: Were there any complications that you felt you uniquely faced as a woman starting your business?

SARAH: I never felt that my issues were necessarily related to being a woman. But early on, I was so focused on being perfect that it slowed me down. I realized that I could have evolved the business faster if I'd let more people in on my idea. My advice is to not let perfection get in your way. Your business will inevitably change and evolve once the world is interacting with it. Give it the chance to get better, faster.

We have come to our final portion of our first #WBW interview with Founder and Executive Chairwoman of S'well, Sarah Kauss. We hope Sarah's words have inspired and motivated you to achieve whatever goals you have set! Stay tuned, for our next #WBW Interview, and happy National Women's Small Business Month!

WF: What was the hardest sacrifice (if any) you had to make for your business?

SARAH: Lack of personal time. I like to say that S'well was my first baby. Now that I have a baby of my own, I work hard to find moments to disconnect, but admittedly it's not easy. And disconnecting for extended periods of time is even harder. I'm hopeful that this will change.

WF: If you had one piece of advice to give to someone just starting out, what would it be?

SARAH: Make every moment count. I think we've all had times in our career where we wish we were in another role. My advice, if you ever find yourself in that position, is to make the most of your current situation. Gather as much experience as you can, while you're figuring out your next move, to make it a jumping off point for something better.